



Supporting Early Childhood in Iowa

Information from the Iowa Empowerment Board

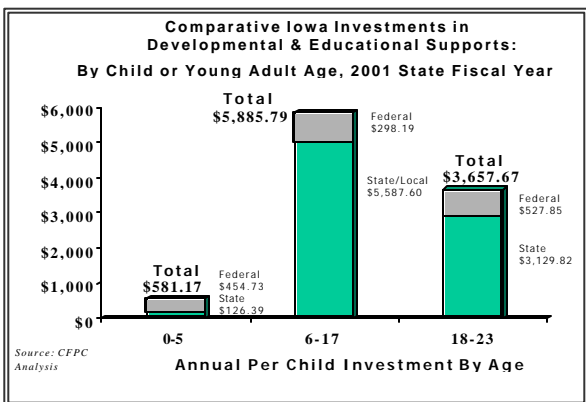
2nd Edition, January, 2004

Most Iowans agree, we want children to be healthy, ready to succeed in school, live in safe and supportive communities, have families that have a sense of security and have the skills, energy and understanding of the importance of nurturing their young children. We also want children to have the opportunity to participate in secure and nurturing child care environments.



The Iowa Empowerment Board, along with many other early care, health and education agencies, organizations and boards, have adopted the vision, ***“Every child, beginning at birth, will be healthy and successful.”*** In support of this vision for early childhood in Iowa, the Iowa Empowerment Board wishes to share information and to encourage state and local discussions that make young children a priority in Iowa. This document reflects research and literature in the field of early care, health and education. These statements, statistics and questions reinforce the vital need for investment in early childhood.

The Iowa Empowerment Board supports state and community partnerships by promoting collaboration among education, health and human services. State support can assist communities to identify their desired results for improving the quality of life for children ages zero to five and their families. The goal of Community Empowerment is to empower individuals and their communities to achieve these desired results through collaboration with individuals, governments, and agencies.



Iowa’s Current Investment: \$581.17 per child from birth to five. (Chart shows the Comparative Iowa Investments in Developmental and Educational Supports from 2001).

The annual public investment for Iowa children from birth to age 5 is substantially lower than for ages 6-17 and for ages 18-23.

“Our children can’t wait. We can’t afford to ride insensitively over these vital early years any longer. Helping parents to help their children may cost businesses or the government some money. But if we fail, the cost to our nation will be far higher. And our own children and grandchildren will pay too high a price” explains Dr. Berry Brazelton, M.D. in an article in Newsweek.

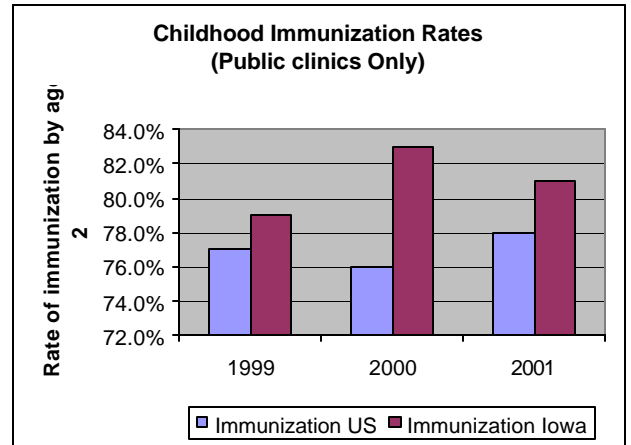
Research Findings

The Centers for Disease Control estimates, for every dollar spent on childhood immunizations, between \$6 and \$30 is saved in direct medical costs that would have been incurred had the disease and its complications not been prevented.



Children who have health care coverage have an overall higher health status and have fewer sick days.

Research shows home visiting programs for women at-risk, beginning during pregnancy, resulted in less time using welfare, less child abuse/neglect, less maternal and juvenile arrests, and a longer time between subsequent pregnancies. Investment in 2 ½ years home visiting costs \$7,000; the estimated return to society is \$28,000.



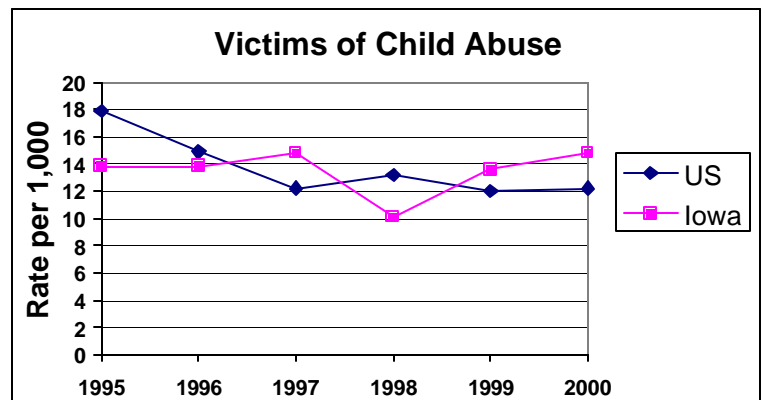
In February 2002, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Task Force on Community Preventive Services concluded "there is strong evidence to recommend home visitation to reduce child maltreatment." The group based this

recommendation on a review of 25 studies that found an overall 39 percent reduction of child maltreatment in high-risk families.

By reducing the risk factors that lead to abuse, Healthy Families America programs are reducing the incidence of abuse. In Iowa, it was reported that of the 826 families participating in Healthy Families America programs in FY '00, 775 (93.8%) had no reports for child maltreatment.

State Empowerment Indicators*

- *Low Birth Weight*
- *Rate of Immunization by age 2*
- *Serious Crime*
- *Juvenile Arrests*
- *Incidence of Child Abuse*
- *Child Abuse in a Child Care Setting*



Questions For Iowans To Ask

- ? Is enough being done to ensure that all children receive recommended well-baby exams with immunizations, lead screens, and dental care?
- ? Are there effective outreach programs to bring uninsured children into available health insurance programs for children?
- ? Do all children covered by Medicaid, *hawk-i*, or other health insurance have access to health and dental care services?
- ? Are we reaching each expectant mother to strive toward healthy births?
- ? Are current efforts reducing the child abuse rate in Iowa?
- ? Are child care and preschool staff prepared to provide a developmentally appropriate, safe and healthy environment?

*Iowa data provided in this document reflects a sampling of data gathered based on the Iowa Empowerment Indicators

Research Findings

Early Head Start programs had a significant impact on the spacing of subsequent births; only 22.9% of Early Head Start mothers had a subsequent birth two years following enrollment, compared to 27.1% of mothers in a control group.

Iowa ranks 2nd in the nation in the percent age of families with preschool children in which all parents in the household are employed. In the last decade, the increase in the workforce led to the necessity of child care for at least 30,000 additional young children in these families. An estimated 71.4 percent of Iowa's children under six years of age are in child care.

In Iowa the average annual cost of child care for a 4-year-old in a center is \$6,198 where as the average annual cost of public college tuition is \$2,998. Employers find that child care has a significant effect on their businesses. Lack of affordable, quality child care may make it difficult to hire qualified employees. Employers are also wise to be concerned about quality early care, health and education because today's children are tomorrow's workers. Our changing economy requires a flexible, educated workforce, and there is increasing evidence of the impact of early childhood development on the future growth of individuals.



Child focused programs that produced the most substantial long-term outcomes combined center-based services for children with significant parent involvement through home visiting. A longitudinal study of the Chicago Child-Parent Center found that program graduates earned higher salaries because they completed more years of school. Benefits to the public include increased tax revenues, lower rates of arrest, and savings on school remedial services. The cost of the program was about \$7,000 per child, and the study found that participants generated an average return of \$47,759 per participant.

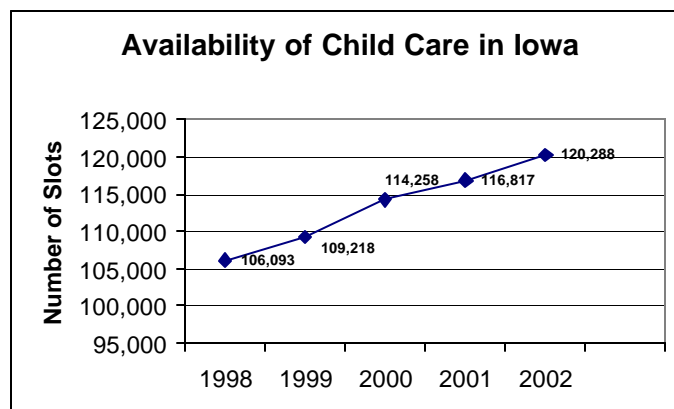
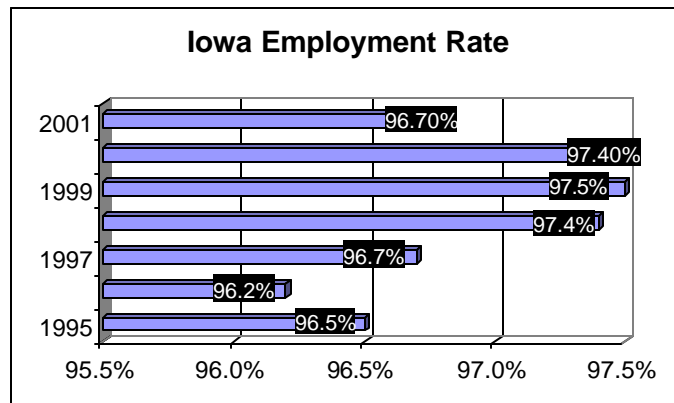
The findings of the High/Scope Perry Preschool Study indicated that adults born in poverty who participated in a high-quality, active learning preschool program have had half as many criminal arrests, significantly higher monthly earnings and higher percentage of home ownership, and greater commitment to marriage. Over participants' lifetimes, the public is receiving an estimated \$7.16 for every dollar invested.

State Empowerment Indicators*

- Poverty Level
- Employment Rate
- Availability of Child Care
- Teen Birth Rate

Questions for Iowans to Ask

- ? Are parents able to find employment that provides sufficient income to meet the needs of their family?
- ? Are policies and services being implemented that promote linkage among agencies, integrate services and reduce fragmentation?



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Research Findings

The importance of high quality, educational child care from early infancy is now clear. The Abecedarian study provides scientific evidence that early childhood education significantly improves the scholastic success and educational attainments of poor children even into early adulthood. Young adults in the program have consistently outperformed the control group on cognitive, math and reading achievement tests. At age 21, more of these young adults were in college or in jobs that required high skill levels.

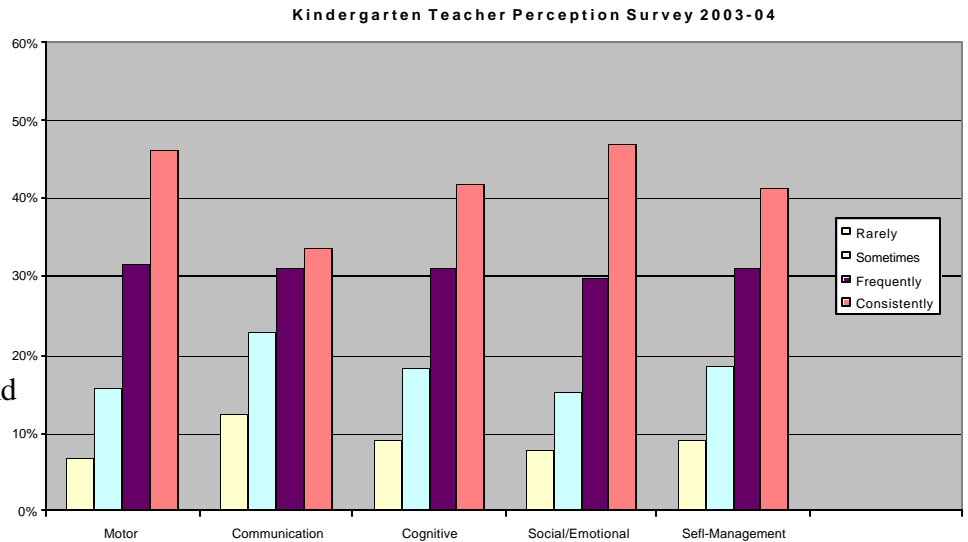
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Over 80% of the children who attended Iowa's Shared Visions preschool programs were rated at or above average in reading and writing at the end of kindergarten.

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A research and evaluation project found that 3-year-old children that participated in the Early Head Start program performed significantly better in the areas of cognition, language, and social-emotional development than a control group.

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Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute in North Carolina found that preschoolers participating in a high quality child care program are ahead of their peers in language, literacy and math skills. The quality of the program made a difference over and above the effects of income, gender and ethnicity.

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Based on national research conducted on Head Start programs, children attending Head Start showed significant expansion of their vocabularies and early writing skills. Notably, the proportion of children scoring close to or above the national mean expanded dramatically from 24 to 34 percent from Fall to Spring - nearly a 40 percent increase.

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State Empowerment Indicators*

- *Children entering kindergarten are ready for school*

Questions for Iowans to Ask

- ? Are quality early childhood settings available for all children 0 to 5?
- ? Are standards for child care and preschool adequate to ensure quality?
- ? Do assessments provide useful information to support children's learning and development, to plan and implement individualized instruction and to communicate with families?
- ? Are professional development opportunities available for individuals who care for and educate young children?
- ? Is full-day kindergarten available to all 5-year olds?



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